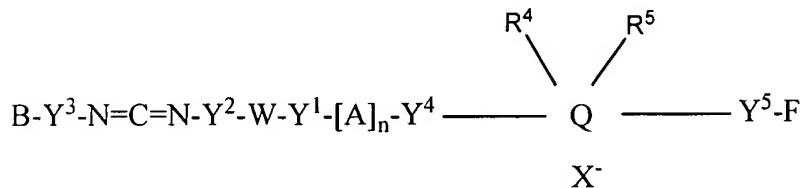


AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

1-10. (Cancelled)

11. (Currently amended) A method for detecting a nucleic acid by hybridization utilizing which comprises hybridizing a nucleic acid labeled with a labeling substance, wherein the labeling substance is a fluorescent group-containing carbodiimide compound having at least one group selected from a carboxyl group, a sulfo group, a phosphono group and a phospho group which have substitution of an alkali metal, an alkaline earth metal or a basic group containing a nitrogen or phosphorus atom, which is represented by the following general formula (III):



(III)

wherein,

X represents a halogen atom or a sulfonic acid group;

A represents a functional group selected from the group consisting of -CH₂-, -NHCO-, -CONH-, -O-, -S-, -NR¹- wherein R¹ represents a linear, cyclic or branched saturated or unsaturated aliphatic hydrocarbon group having 1-20 carbon atoms, -NR²R³- wherein R² and R³ each independently represent a hydrogen atom, a linear or branched saturated or unsaturated aliphatic hydrocarbon group having 1-20 carbon atoms, or a cycloalkyl group, an aryl group or an aralkyl group which may have a substituent, provided that when one of R² and R³ is a hydrogen atom, the other represents a linear or branched saturated or unsaturated aliphatic hydrocarbon group having 1-20 carbon atoms, or a cycloalkyl group, an aryl group or an aralkyl group which may have a substituent, or R² and R³ may be bonded to each other to form as a whole a nitrogen-containing heterocyclic group which may contain an oxygen atom, -COO-, -OCO-, -NHSO₂-, -NHC(S)NH-, and -SO₂NH-;

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n represents 0 or 1;

W represents a direct bond or a quaternary onium group;

Y¹, Y², Y³ and Y⁴ each represent a functional group represented by the general formula

(II) :

-(CH₂)_p-(L)_r-(CH₂)_q- (II)

wherein, L represents a functional group selected from the group consisting of -CH₂-, -NHCO-, -CONH-, -O-, -S-, -NR¹-, p and q each represent an integer of from 0 to 20; and r represents the integers 0 or 1;

B represents a hydrogen atom or a monovalent organic group being the same as or different from -W-Y¹-[A]_n-Y⁴; and

F represents a fluorescent group;

Q represents either a tertiary or quaternary nitrogen atom, or a tertiary or quaternary phosphorus atom;

R⁴ and R⁵ each independently represent a hydrogen atom, a linear or branched saturated or unsaturated aliphatic hydrocarbon group having 1-20 carbon atoms, or a cycloalkyl group, an aryl group or an aralkyl group which may contain a substituent, provided that when one of R⁴ and R⁵ is a hydrogen atom, the other represents a linear or branched saturated or unsaturated aliphatic hydrocarbon group having 1-20 carbon atoms, or a cycloalkyl group, an aryl group or an aralkyl group which may contain a substituent, or R⁴ and R⁵ may be bonded to each other to form a nitrogen-containing heterocyclic group or a phosphorus-containing heterocyclic group, which may contain an oxygen atom as Q⁺R⁴R⁵-;

Y⁵ has the same meaning as defined for Y¹, Y², Y³ and Y⁴; and

at least one functional group selected from B, Y¹, Y², Y³, Y⁴, Y⁵, A, W, R⁴, R⁵ and F has at least one group selected from a carboxyl group, a sulfo group, a phosphono group and a phospho group which have substitution of an alkali metal, an alkaline earth metal or a basic group containing a nitrogen or phosphorous atom.

12. (Previously presented) The method according to Claim 11, wherein the functional group of the fluorescent group-containing carbodiimide compound is selected from B, Y¹, Y², Y³, Y⁴, A, and W in the formula (III) and has a least one group selected from a carboxyl group, a sulfo

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group, a phosphono group, and a phospho group which have substitution of an alkali metal, an alkaline earth metal or a basic group containing a nitrogen or phosphorus atom.

13. (Previously presented) The method according to Claim 11, wherein the functional group of the fluorescent group-containing carbodiimide compound is selected from Y⁵, R⁴, R⁵ and F in the formula (III) and has at least one group selected from a carboxyl group, a sulfo group, a phosphono group and a phospho group which have substitution of an alkali metal, an alkaline earth metal, or a basic group containing a nitrogen or phosphorus atom.